



Griffin 06 Sends

Soldiers and Families of Task Force XII,

Walking in to Joint Base Balad's Task Force XII headquarters again, I was thrilled to see our old "T wall", bearing the TF XII logo, already back in place in front of the building. Our brothers in Task Force 49 went to the trouble of putting it right back where we left it - though now a year older and battle-tested by blowing sands and a hot desert sun.

As I've settled back in to life at Balad, I've found the wall now represents more than just our colors. Seven months ago our headquarters left a relatively fresh group of aviators adjusting to the Multi-National Corps – Iraq mission; we returned to Balad to find a battle-hardened group of combat veterans who, like our wall, have proudly stood up to the tests of this extended deployment.

My heartfelt thanks goes out to TF 49, and to all of the Soldiers throughout our organizations who have made this intertwining relationship so seamless. Soldiers from our formations have been asked to operate at bases throughout Iraq, from Taji to Talil, and from BIAP to Basra ... and they've done it efficiently and professionally.

Now that the final major muscle moves are completed, we turn our attentions to home. The Dust Devils of 2-147th AHB have departed after a proud tour of duty and 1-244th, Task Force Mojo, is already working hard to build on their own proud combat heritage.

By this time next month, most of 2-159th ARB will be reuniting with their own Families back in Illesheim, and their sister battalion, 3-159th ARB will pick up where the Gunslingers left off.

I know that you are all anxious to get home; as more than 1,000 Soldiers prepare to leave the 12th CAB by the end of January, many of us are already looking ahead beyond reintegration and planning for new assignments.

Take heart in the fact that the finish line is in sight, but remember the race is not over. My mantra has been simply this – run through the tape. Keep your mind on this important mission, and continue to build on your well-deserved reputation of excellence.

Finally, I want to thank our Family members and rear detachment Soldiers for your continued support. I've already heard some of the exciting plans for re-integration. I can't wait to see how it all comes together. Sometimes the final months can be the toughest. Hang in there ... you're almost done!

It is my continued honor to serve with all of you.
"Wings of Victory!"

Col. Timothy J. Edens
Commander, Task Force XII